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SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER KOIKE COMMENTS ON ELECTION
FALLOUT, F-22, CHINA

Classified By: Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer. Reason: 1.5 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Defense Minister Yuriko Koike, meeting with former U.S. Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert on August 6, said that opposition control of the Diet's Upper House would generate some "turmoil," particularly true with respect to the renewal of the antiterrorism legislation authorizing Japan's Self-Defense Forces to support the multinational mission in Afghanistan. She stressed that Japan hoped to buy the F-22 fighter aircraft from the United States not just to obtain a "new toy" but because it would enhance Japan's defense capabilities. Koike also noted that the Japanese were endeavoring to establish a new apparatus to secure information and intelligence in the light of recent leaks. Koike and Hastert agreed on the importance of engaging China on environmental, economic, and military issues, and Koike indicated that Japan was looking forward to a visit by China's defense minister as well as a Chinese ship visit in the near future. End summary.

"Turmoil" Possible Due to Election Results

¶2. (C) Minister Koike opened the August 6 meeting with Representative Hastert (accompanied by the Ambassador) with an expression of appreciation for Mr. Hastert's support of recent Congressional resolutions noting that the U.S.-Japan alliance is "indispensable." She observed that the political dynamic had changed both in the United States and most

recently in Japan following the July 29 election for the Upper House of Japan's Diet and expressed concern that the opposition parties led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) that now hold the majority in the Diet's Upper House would generate a "little bit of turmoil." This was particularly true with respect to the renewal of the antiterrorism legislation authorizing Japan's Self-Defense Forces to support the multinational mission in Afghanistan, to which the DPJ had announced its opposition. Although the bill needed to pass before the end of October, an Upper House veto of the bill would substantially delay its passage even though the ruling party would be able to override the veto in a second Lower House vote.

13. (C) Koike indicated her commitment, as a former minister in charge of Okinawan affairs, to work for the smooth implementation of the defense realignment process. Although the coordination between the Japanese central government and the Okinawan authorities remains a domestic issue, its impact on U.S.-Japan relations is undeniable, Koike noted.

Support for Engagement with China

14. (C) Koike stated that Japan was looking to maintain good contacts with China. The Japanese were expecting a visit by China's defense minister as well as a port call by elements of the Chinese fleet in the near future, she said. Noting that she paid close attention to developments in China in such areas as

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human rights and the environment, Koike agreed with Rep. Hastert's observation that it was important to maintain pressure on China to cooperate on environmental protection.

15. (C) Responding to Rep. Hastert's discussion of his interest in Japan's nuclear energy program, Minister Koike emphasized that the main building of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plant had not been damaged in the recent earthquake in Niigata Prefecture, demonstrating that Japan had taken adequate steps to guarantee the safety of its nuclear facilities. In contrast, she raised concerns about the possible fragility of China's planned nuclear power plants as that country looked to develop its nuclear energy infrastructure.

Japan Wants F-22 for Substance, Not Show

16. (C) Koike made a strong appeal to Rep. Hastert for U.S. approval to allow Japan to buy the F-22 fighter aircraft. She stressed that Japan did not simply want a "new toy" but instead believed the F-22 would significantly enhance Japan's defense capabilities. Koike asked for Rep. Hastert's support for a possible F-22 sale. She added that the Japanese government was also taking steps to set up a new apparatus to maintain the security of intelligence and other information in light of recent leaks to the press of confidential information.

17. (U) Codel Hastert did not have an opportunity to clear this message.
SCHIEFFER